

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

Plaintiff,

v.

EQUITY GROUP HOLDINGS,

Defendant.

Civil Action No. 91 0153

MOTION FOR ENTRY OF JUDGMENT

Plaintiff, having this date filed its Complaint in the captioned case, together with a Stipulation and proposed Final Judgment, hereby moves this Court for entry of Final Judgment. By agreement of the parties, the Final Judgment provides for the payment of a civil penalty of \$850,000 under Section 7A(g)(1) of the Clayton Act, 15 U.S.C. § 18a(g)(1).

STATEMENT OF POINTS AND AUTHORITIES

The Complaint in this action alleges that defendant Equity Group Holdings ("Equity Group"), in acquiring voting securities of Interco Incorporated ("Interco"), violated Section (a) of the Hart-Scott-Rodino Antitrust Improvements Act of 1976 ("Hart-Scott-Rodino Act"), 15 U.S.C. § 18a(a), which prohibits certain acquisitions of voting securities or assets until a notification has been filed with the Department of Justice and the Federal Trade Commission and a waiting period has expired.

The Complaint alleges that defendant Equity Group was continuously in violation of the Hart-Scott-Rodino Act during the period from May 18, 1988, through November 25, 1988, with respect to its acquisitions of Interco stock. Section (g)(1) of the Hart-Scott-Rodino Act, 15 U.S.C. § 18a(g)(1), provides that any person who fails to comply with the Act shall be liable to the United States for a civil penalty of not more than \$10,000 for each day during which such person is in violation of the Act. Accordingly, the Complaint seeks "an appropriate civil penalty." As the Stipulation and proposed Final Judgment indicate, defendant Equity Group has agreed to pay a civil penalty of \$850,000 within 15 days of entry of the Final Judgment.

The Antitrust Procedures and Penalties Act ("APPA"), 15 U.S.C. § 16(b)-(h), requires that any proposal for a "consent judgment" submitted by the United States in a civil case filed "under the antitrust laws" be filed with the court at least 60 days in advance of its effective date, published in the Federal Register and newspaper for public comment, and reviewed by the court for the purpose of determining whether it is in the public interest. Key features of the APPA are preparation by the United States of a "competitive impact statement" explaining the proceeding and the proposed judgment, and the consideration by the court of the proposed judgment's competitive impact and impact on the public generally as well

as individuals alleging specific injury from the violation set forth in the complaint.

The United States does not believe that the procedures of the APPA are required in this action because the Complaint seeks, and the Final Judgment provides for, only the payment of civil penalties. In our view, a consent judgment in a case seeking only monetary penalties is not the type of "consent judgment" Congress had in mind when it passed the APPA. Civil penalties are intended to penalize the defendant for violating the law, and, unlike injunctive relief, have no "competitive impact," and no effect on other persons or on the public generally. The legislative history of the APPA does not contain any indication that Congress intended to subject settlements of civil penalty actions to its competitive impact review procedures.<sup>1/</sup>

Thus, courts to date have not required use of APPA procedures in cases involving only the payment of civil penalties. Indeed, courts in this district have consistently entered consent judgments for civil penalties under the Hart-

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<sup>1/</sup> Civil penalties may also be assessed under Section 11(1) of the Clayton Act, 15 U.S.C. § 21(1), for violation of Federal Trade Commission orders.

Scott-Rodino Act without employing APPA procedures.<sup>2/</sup>

Similarly, a consent judgment for civil penalties under Section 11(1) of the Clayton Act was entered November 1, 1983, in United States v. RSR Corp., Civ. No. CA3-83-1828-C (N.D. Tex.), without employing APPA procedures. Previously, in United States v. ARA Services, Inc., Civ. No. 77-1165-C (E.D. Mo.), a consent judgment calling for both equitable relief and civil penalties was approved by the court on August 14, 1979, after the United States had taken the position in APPA proceedings that the civil penalties component of that judgment was not open to public objection. See 44 Fed. Reg. 41583 (July 17, 1979).

There may be circumstances, of course, in which the procedures of the APPA, while not required, would serve the public interest in a civil penalties case. Thus, in United States v. The Coastal Corp., Civ. No. 84-2675 (D.D.C.), the United States noted its view that the APPA was not applicable,


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<sup>2/</sup> United States v. Service Corporation International, Civ. No. 91-0025 (D.D.C. January 14, 1991); United States v. Reliance Group Holdings, Inc., Civ. No. 90-2698 (D.D.C. Oct. 31, 1990); United States v. Baker Hughes, Inc., 1990-1 CCH Trade Cases ¶ 68,976 (D.D.C.); United States v. Tengelmann Warenhandelsgesellschaft, 1989-1 CCH Trade Cases ¶ 68,623 (D.D.C.); United States v. Lonrho, PLC, 1988-2 CCH Trade Cases ¶ 68,232 (D.D.C.); United States v. Roscoe Moss Corp., 1988-1 CCH Trade Cases ¶ 68,040 (D.D.C.); United States v. First City Financial Corp. Ltd., 1988-1 CCH Trade Cases ¶ 67,967 (D.D.C.); United States v. Trump, 1988-1 CCH Trade Cases ¶ 67,968 (D.D.C.); United States v. Wickes Companies Inc., 1988-1 CCH Trade Cases ¶ 67,966 (D.D.C.). In each case, the United States noted the issue in a motion for entry of judgment, explaining to the court that it believed the APPA inapplicable.

but chose to employ the APPA procedures, believing that those procedures would in that particular case - the first brought under the Hart-Scott-Rodino Act - help describe to the public the circumstances and events that gave rise to the complaint and final judgment. 49 Fed. Reg. 36455 (Sept. 17, 1984).<sup>3/</sup> There are no circumstances counselling in favor of using APPA procedures in this case.

For the above reasons, the United States asks the Court to enter the Final Judgment in this case.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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<sup>3/</sup> In the only other case involving civil penalties under the Hart-Scott-Rodino Act where APPA procedures were used, United States v. Bell Resources Ltd., Civ. No. 85-CIV-6202 (S.D.N.Y.), the United States viewed the APPA as applicable because the complaint sought injunctive relief with respect to the alleged Hart-Scott-Rodino Act violation in addition to civil penalties.

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that on this 25th day of January, 1991, I caused a copy of the foregoing Motion For Entry Of Judgment to be served by mail, postage prepaid, on:

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D. BRUCE PEARSON